

Weekly Bureau of Information for All Who Till the Soil or Are Interested in Making Homes

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT

All inquiries and communications addressed to The Times-Dispatch will receive prompt attention. This department will accept suggestions and contributions or suggestions will be welcomed.

Facts for Farmers, Stock Breeders, Poultry Raisers, Orchardists, Truckers and Gardeners—Queries and Answers

FOLLOW NATURE AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE

It is not the easiest thing in the world to see young chickens as to bring them to an early and perfect maturity and then to continue feeding them to produce eggs and meat in the greatest quantities. Too many people let the chickens feed themselves, others seem to think that a few handfuls of corn thrown out night and morning is sufficient. Unless confined in pens where they cannot get at their natural food, chickens will manage to survive on indifferent feed for a long time, but if they are to be brought to a full state of perfection and if they are to be made to produce all the eggs possible and tip the beam at market time at the highest notch, a careful study of feeding is necessary.

The natural food of fowls is meat seeds and grain. The meat they find in bugs and worms and the dry feed in the seeds of grass and grain of the range. If allowed free range and access to this in sufficient quantities fowls will balance their own rations and perhaps get as good results as if fed by hand. If they are confined the lack of meat must be supplied, but must be understood that animal matter in the shape of meat meal, meat scraps or cut bone is dangerous unless it is fed in conjunction with other food.

It is extremely dangerous to give fowls too much of any concentrated food, as it only renders them ravenous and unsatisfied, and in the end results in disease and death. Food must be nutritious, and to balance the bulk of water and animal matter in the feed proper proportion to form just the right combination to produce health and the best conditions for laying and producing meat.

As to the quantity to be fed there can be no fixed rule. The safe way is to feed liberally—all that the flock will eat up clean. It is never safe to cut down the rations of growing birds until some feed is left over every day.

Of course, too much food of the fattening quality is not good for laying hens because they do not lay well when overfed, but this does not mean that they should be starved. A well-balanced ration, consisting in the main of corn, wheat and animal matter, will keep a hen in good condition. We do not believe that a very lean hen is the best layer.

To persons who are obliged to buy all the feed for their flocks the question is one of economy, and many people who have raised poultry for years without keeping account of expenses, and then turned to a sensible system of accounts, have been

surprised to learn that it cost them more to keep their flocks than they received from them. However, people are learning how to manage poultry, and even with grain at the high prices that have prevailed the last five years have been able to make a comparatively good profit in poultry.

For growing chickens a mixture composed of three pounds of wheat, three pounds of corn meal, meat containing 50 per cent of digestible protein mixed with two pounds of finely cut clover or alfalfa makes an excellent ration. Other grains at times may take the place of wheat or corn, although nothing will quite equal them.

Of course, in addition to grain and meat fowls must have clean water and a regulated dose of wood charcoal at all times. Green feed in the shape of chopped alfalfa leaves or clover is essential, particularly in the winter when the birds do not have access to the outdoors. This can be kept before the chickens in all times and may be fed in the grain mixture.

It is absolutely necessary because chickens cannot digest the food in their crops without it. For this purpose ground water shells, coarse sand or ground rock from a quarry will do. When large chickens supply their own grit and it is not necessary to keep it before them except when they are confined.

The difficulty of feeding and food clean and of having chickens use moderate amounts of food is being

overcome by the use of the following:

Chicken Feeding Trough With Cover Removed.

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PROTECTION FROM RABBITS

Rabbits, even the Virginia kind, are very particular as to what they eat, and feed only on vegetable matter. They prefer the more succulent kinds, such as vegetables, clover, alfalfa and alfalfa hay. When none of these are available, they often eat the bark of trees, especially when snow covers other food.

It is very easy to prevent rabbits from injuring trees and all other damage are due to neglect rather than to lack of efficient remedies. Your premises should not afford hiding places for rabbits such as brush piles. This is not meant to include green cover crops in the garden. An orchard with a cover crop above the snow is seldom if ever injured.

Traps are very effective in catching rabbits. The more traps you have the better. This is not to be construed as a method as poisoning for protecting the trees, but it furnishes amusement for the children and also provides meat for the table.

There are two general ways of poisoning rabbits: (1) By placing poisoned water in their runs, especially during dry weather. (2) By placing poisoned food where they can get it. The following is a wash extremely recommended by the Ohio Station, has given satisfaction: one part sulphate of strychnine, one-third part borax, one well-washed soap, ten parts water. Shake well and apply to tender twigs with a brush or by dipping and distribute the poisoned twigs around the trees.

There have been a number of washes of this kind, various kinds recommended as being effective against rabbits. The disadvantage of these washes is that they are not permanent.

The United States Department of Agriculture recommends the lime-sulphur wash as giving satisfactory results. This wash consists of unsalted lime, twenty pounds; flowers of sulphur, fifteen pounds; water, fifty gallons. The lime, sulphur and one-third of the water are boiled together for one hour, and then the rest of the water is added. By adding salt the wash will stick better.

The Arkansas Experiment Station has found that painting the trunks of the trees with white lead and linseed oil gave very satisfactory results. Mixed paints should not be substituted, as they may contain oils which would injure the trees. One advantage of this mixture is that one application is sufficient for the entire season.

The great superiority of the mule consists in his greater endurance of heat and severe labor, and ability to subsist on less food. He is without doubt the most economical machine for the production of power.

The mule is easily broken, as all farmers who have handled them will testify, but it is a good thing to get them used to being handled before they are put to work. The regular work when you need them. Mules are ready for work younger than horses. They are able to endure as much as two years as a colt will at three or four.

Trimming the Trees. Trim a little every year, rather than much in any one year. Peach trees require more pruning than most trees; at least one-half of the new growth should be removed each season.

Aples plucked from the oldest apple tree on the Pacific coast, in Vancouver, British Columbia, and sent to the Department of Agriculture. A. A. Quarnberg, exhorticulture inspector of that district. This famous tree is almost ninety years old and produced a fair crop of apples last year.

The Department of Agriculture is yet to hear from that venerable tree in Patrick County, Va., that has so often been exploited in the columns of The Times-Dispatch.

Roses in Winter. Where the climate is too hard for the tea roses they may still be had a lot of sawdust and manure in the plants deeply. The part of the plants above the sawdust will get killed, but that does not matter with the tea roses, but the harder they are cut back the better, and the sawdust will protect the roots better than anything else.

Many half-hardy plants will come through the winter under sawdust better than with any other protection I know—E. Rexford.

Stock Must Have Good Water. Good water is as essential as food in the wintering of breeding animals, and ample provision should be made to provide the animals with an abundant supply of good, pure water throughout the winter. Other things have mentioned can possibly be dispensed with, but pure water is indispensable. Nor will we wonder when we know that one-half the live weight of all domestic animals is water, and medium by which the universal solvent, and the waste products of the system are made available.

Wooden Water Pipes. Pipes for carrying water, made of iron or steel, are better than those made of wood. A report issued by the United States Forestry Bureau. It says that water, saturated with water and protected by a layer of wood, is practically everlasting. There is a line of two miles of wood pipe at Fayetteville, N. C., laid in 1829, which is sound and in constant use at the present time.

Pipes cost only one-quarter as much as cast iron, and one-half as much as steel; they have greater carrying capacity, they are not affected by electrolysis and they are poor conductors of heat, thus keeping the water cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

Some Little Don'ts. Don't be inquisitive. Don't be discontented with what you have. Don't show in your face. Don't contradict people, even though you know you are right. Don't repeat unpleasant things. Always be cheerful.

Keep Hogs Free From Lice. I have found an effective method of getting the hogs free themselves of lice. Set several short posts in the yards and pastures. Wrap the posts with old sacks; and then once a week saturate these sacks with crude oil or one of the coal tar dips. The hogs bite the lice, he rubs the spot on the sack, and the oil or dip kills the lice. Simple, isn't it? The hogs soon learn to use the posts, and if the sacks are kept saturated, there will be little danger of lice eating up the profits in hog raising—J. Grant.

Clean Up the Garden Spot. Remove all weeds, trimmings and rubbish from the garden. Cover that every plant and bush is properly protected. Cover the ground with clean, composted manure and you may look forward to a fruitful resurrection in the spring.

Currents. Currents are easy to grow in Virginia and market. They pay in the range of \$200 to \$250 an acre. The average price should be \$2 per bushel, and 16 bushels to an acre is only a fair crop. Each current bush ought to pay 25 to 50 cents above the cost of picking.

Feeding Idle Horses. In the feeding of idle horses the high-priced feeds should be avoided in order to keep them in proper condition at the lowest cost. It has been found that idle horses do very well on a winter feed consisting of all the hay, cut straw, corn stalks or sorghum, and a small amount of grain. It is necessary to give a small amount of grain to keep the horse in good condition.

Best Place for Silo. A silo should be built in a place where the animals to be fed from them are kept. The silage should be fed from the silo to the animals. This should not be inside the house, but take up a good deal of room and may give off offensive odors that will taint the milk. The silo should be where they may most conveniently be filled, and the silage should be where they may most conveniently be fed.

How Foods Affect Eggs. Careful experiments indicate that the foods eaten by hens may affect egg quality. For example, green foods and yellow corn seem to cause a dark color in the yolk, while the use of white corn, wheat and buckwheat results in pale yolks. Birds on free range lay eggs that have more color than those from hens kept in yards without exercise. Excessive amounts of green food are thought to produce eggs of marked odor and flavor; onions and cabbage having a direct influence in this respect.

Brooders. You can make your own brooders and brooder cones if you want to, but it is a better idea to buy a well-advised brooder and brooder cones. Variety of very reasonable. It will pay you to write to them for information.

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BRIEF NOTES THOUGHT OUT BY THE WAYSIDE

Asbes or air-slaked lime on the floors of the poultry house will assist in keeping the house free from mites.

Running water is badly needed on every farm. Are you planning to provide it?

Onions of grease save dollars in repairs.

Fruit growing is a business requiring intelligence and perseverance, and where these qualities are brought to bear, success will be assured.

Discard the animals which have failed at the end of the year to pay for their keep.

The seeds of rust and decay bring a harvest of loss to the farmer.

It's the man who has nothing to do that doesn't have time to do anything else.

Warm quarters and the right ration will bring out the eggs.

A draft in the poultry house means a drop in the flock. Prevention is the best method and much cheaper than the cure.

The most personal problem connected with the animal making of a fruit farm is the choice of varieties.

A well-ventilated cellar is the best place to operate the incubator.

Look well after the early chicks. They will pay well if given good treatment; otherwise, it is best to not have any at all.

Lucky are the farmers who have well-dressed flocks, for the ensilage makes far better cattle, more milk, less labor in winter, and more profit.

All things considered, it pays better to grind feed for the dairy cows than for any other class of stock.

Do not neglect to go over shade and fruit trees and remove the nests of brown-tailed moths and other pests that will destroy them later on.

Whole corn is a good feed for setting hens. Water, grit and dust baths should also be provided.

The Farmers' Club. The farmers' club is a small thing in itself, but through its influence in bringing about community effort, it is, we believe, one of the very strongest factors for improvement. The organization of a farmers' club is not difficult. Two people co-operating can do many things that neither can do alone.

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FACTS FOR FARMERS, STOCK BREEDERS, POULTRY RAISERS, ORCHARDISTS, TRUCKERS AND GARDENERS—QUERIES AND ANSWERS

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MANY SOCIAL PROBLEMS ON CONFERENCE PROGRAM

National Charities and Corrections Meeting Will Be Held in Indianapolis in May.

Business Men, Newspaper Editors and Public Officials Will Be Invited to Give Their Views—More Than Sixty Sessions to Be Held.

CHICAGO, March 5.—Social problems ranging from how to deal with the bad boy to the nation's preparedness for dealing with the mass of human wreckage which is expected to be cast on our shores after the European war, will be taken up by the forty-third annual meeting of the National Conference on Charities and Corrections at Indianapolis, May 19 to 27.

Announcement of preliminary plans for the gathering was made from the office of W. T. Cross, general secretary of the conference, here today. Half a dozen allied organizations will meet in conjunction with the general conference.

Business men, newspaper editors and public officials will be invited to give their views of social problems and the practical value of organized charity in a symposium arranged by Graham R. Brown, of New York. This will be held in connection with the section on social problems.

In the section on corrections, Arthur Woods, police commissioner of New York, and Mrs. Alice Stebbins Wells, a member of the Los Angeles police force, will discuss the police as a social force.

Closer co-operation between social agencies and the public schools will be considered in a section devoted to discussion of children. The program for this part of the convention calls for the appearance of William Wirt, superintendent of schools of Indianapolis, and Miss Anna Herkner, of the Maryland Bureau of Statistics and Information.

Mr. Wirt will explain the "Girty System" in so far as it has social bearings, and Miss Herkner will speak on "Steering the Child Into Work."

Conditions adverse to efficient work under popular government will be considered in a section on the family and the community. This section also will take up methods of co-ordinating the civic work of smaller communities.

Raymond A. Hoyer, director of the Tri-Cities Social Center, at La Salle, Ill., being among the speakers.

Sections on health and alcoholism will discuss phases of the varying reactions of health and heredity to poverty and crime. Dr. C. A. Reed, of Cincinnati, former president of the American Medical Association, will speak on "The Right to Be Well Born," and the results of an investigation into the attitude of large employers toward the use of alcohol will be reported.

The function of the psychopathic hospital in social service will be taken up by Dr. E. E. Southard, of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital, and Joseph P. Myers, of Philadelphia, executive secretary of the National Committee on Mental Deficiency.

Public outdoor relief, which has been under the ban of expert charitable workers in large cities for several years, will be considered again in a section devoted to public and private charities.

Anticipation of the character of immigration after the European war will dominate the discussions on unemployment. One of the high officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is being sought as a speaker on this subject.

All told, more than sixty sessions will be held by the general conference and the sections into which it will be divided. In addition, plans are being laid for a series of large popular gatherings in the evenings, the first of which will be held May 19, and serve to open the conference week. The address on this occasion will be delivered by Father Francis H. Gavisk, of Indianapolis, president of the conference.

Further bad reports expected in wheat.

Stories of winter-killing and damage by insects now awaited by market.

CHICAGO, March 5.—Crop reports to come forward from this time on will have more or less to do with the changes in wheat values. In many sections of the country which are anding unfavorable reports there is now a snow-covering and the likelihood is there will be a cessation of reports of deterioration for the time being.

Unfavorable reports, however, will come later, and they will come in large quantities, and are likely to be pronounced in character.

The wheat trade on the whole seems to be prepared for further reports of bad damage from winter-killing as well as from insects, and the form of bank shrewd and conservative operators in wheat will not be caught without a good line of that grain on hand.

The July future will continue the favorite among the bull operators as crop losses will be reflected in that month more than in the May.

It is believed four of the larger operators in the Chicago wheat market are goodly holders of the July future.

Their lines have been accumulated quietly and mainly under cover so as not to attract an army of followers, and be obliged to carry them upward on any advance in the market.

One of the features of the wheat market the past week was the large number of unfavorable crop reports received that were accompanied by buying orders. As soon as there is growing weather in the Northern districts, and the crop losses appear, there will

be a largely increased number of buying orders from the country, and those on the bear side of the market doubtless will be obliged to take a back seat for the time being.

There is no short business worthy of mention in the corn trade, and the domestic demand being light, the situation is against any advance in values. Primary receipts continue to run much over last year, the total for last week being 6,299,000 bushels, compared with 3,597,000 bushels for a like period last year. The estimates on farm reserves as made by local statisticians may be called bearish in character, not only as to the amount held, but also as to the manner in which it will be disposed of.

There are big farm reserves of oats not only in this country, but in Canada, and these conditions are more than likely to tell on values later.

Provisions are now believed to be in a strong position, as the buying of such products has been on a large scale on foreign shipping contracts. Hogs at the yards have held fairly, and some of the best judges of conditions believe the raw material is well called bearish in character, not only as to the amount held, but also as to the manner in which it will be disposed of.

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